

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY KELIN,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 970th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 November 2013

**Regarding the municipal elections in Kosovo**

Mr. Chairperson,

We commend the work undertaken by the OSCE to prepare for and organize, in a status-neutral manner, the municipal elections in northern Kosovo on 3 November. We welcome Belgrade's constructive contribution to the holding of these elections.

In that connection, we resolutely condemn the acts of violence that occurred on the eve of and during the voting on 3 November. We have taken note of the decision the OSCE was forced to take in response to these actions and following consultations with the Kosovo Central Election Commission (CEC). The work of the election commissions in four northern municipalities of the territory was terminated ahead of time and their personnel evacuated. We call for a thorough investigation into these violent incidents, first and foremost the attacks on the polling stations in North Mitrovica on 3 November. We were perplexed at the absence of a prompt response by the law enforcement forces and also by the international security presences in Kosovo – the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) and NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR).

We note the statement by the chairperson of the Kosovo CEC to the effect that the early close of voting in four northern municipalities of the territory did not call into question the successful completion of the electoral process.

We also welcome the agreements on additional steps reached yesterday in Brussels.

In conclusion, we should like once again to emphasize that a peaceful political solution to the Kosovo problem can only be achieved within a full and equal dialogue between Belgrade and Priština and on the basis of meticulous observance of the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, which remains fully in force and continues to be the basis under international law, binding on all parties, for a Kosovo settlement. In that connection, we take as our point of departure the need for all the international presences in Kosovo to be strictly guided by their existing mandates and to continue to operate in a status-neutral manner.

Thank you for your attention.